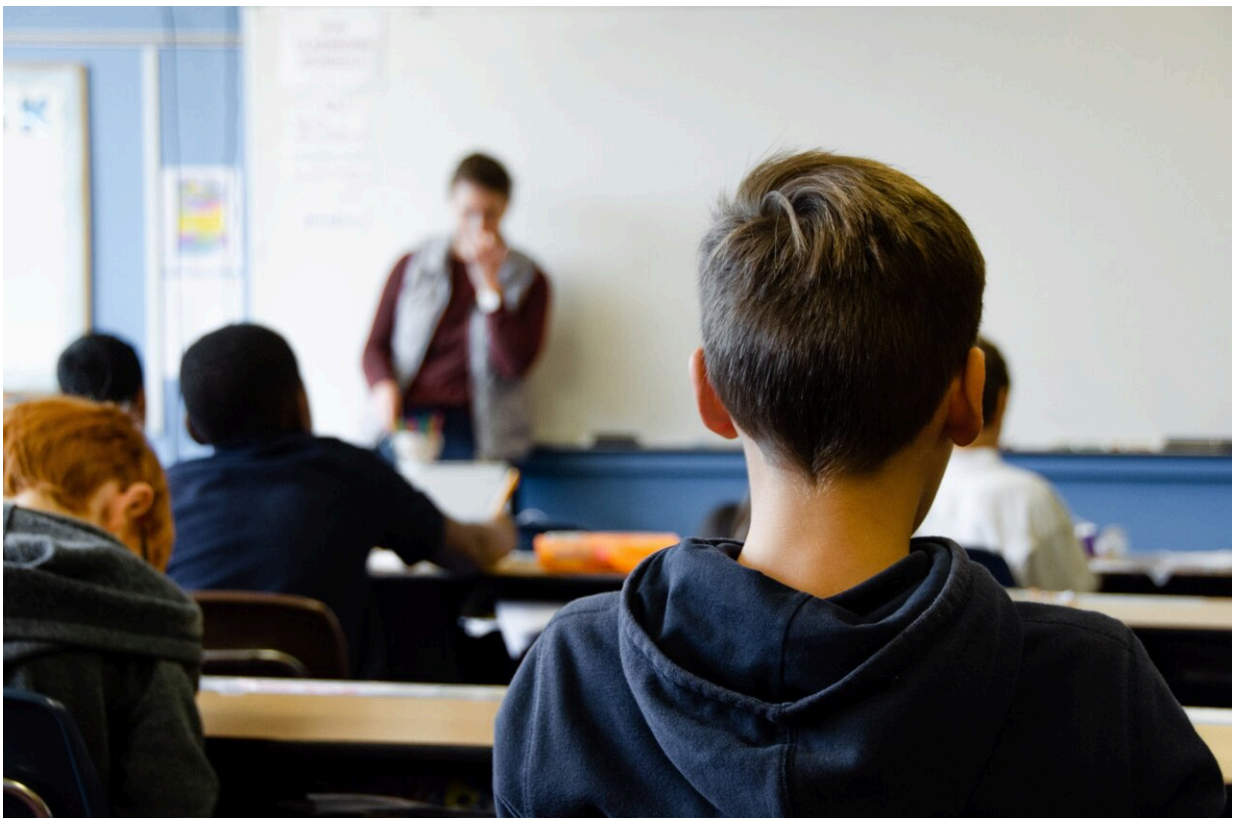


Study finds clear instruction, parental support predict students' sense of school belonging

March 27 2024, by Mike Krings



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A new study from the University of Kansas has analyzed the roles classroom interaction and parental support play in school connectedness,

finding clearly communicated instruction in class and support from parents are closely linked with belonging.

The study found students who feel their [teachers](#) provide good [classroom](#) management felt supported by those teachers and that they belong in their school. Those who felt they had more support from their parents also felt like they belonged in school, but parent support did not predict feelings of teacher support.

Understanding the links between support and school connectedness can help students succeed as well as help schools and teachers use practices that foster belonging, according to the researchers.

Anqi Peng, doctoral student in KU's School of Education & Human Sciences, has a scholarly interest in student-school connections. She began this research journey by studying school outcomes for students who are learning English as a [second language](#) while being educated in English-only classes in American schools.

"It made me think a lot about identity and how students felt about school connection and if they felt they were supported," Peng said. "And I found there wasn't much research into how we can foster school connectedness. Research had shown that school connectedness decreases during adolescence, but not necessarily why or how we can facilitate it. That's what we're hoping to learn more about."

For the study, authors analyzed data from 4,838 [high school students](#) in the United States from the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment. Students in the data set expressed how much support they felt in a variety of school and family factors. For school they specifically examined classroom management, instructional support and emotional support. The students were also asked about how much parental support they felt.

Results showed classroom interactions to be the factor that most predicted teacher support and belonging to school. Especially in terms of classroom management, students who felt their teachers managed class well by minimizing classroom disruptions had a higher sense of connection to their schools. Instructional support, in which students that felt teachers set clear goals and adapted lessons to fulfill students' learning needs, also positively predicted teacher support, but emotional support was not related to teacher support or school belonging.

The study, co-written by Peng; Meagan Patterson, professor of educational psychology; and Sean Joo, assistant professor of educational psychology, all of KU, was published in the [Journal of Youth and Adolescence](#).

"I think this study shows the importance of classroom management and instructional support and that their impact may have been underestimated, compared to [emotional support](#) from teachers," Patterson said. "I feel that's an important area of focus for future research. We also know that how students feel about school is not static, so we'd like to look at if this changes over time."

"Teacher support is more related to specific behaviors in the classroom. Parental support is more related to school connectedness in general," Peng said. "We are looking at both feelings of support from teachers in a certain class and school belonging in general. Students move through classes throughout the day, so we wanted to see a bit more about how these things fit together."

Students were asked about their feelings of in-class interactions during their English classes.

"There is a certain emotional vulnerability that comes up in English class that we thought might make English classes especially important for how

students feel in relation to their school," Patterson said.

The authors said more understanding of what fosters school connectedness can help schools, teachers and families provide more developmentally appropriate supports necessary to help students feel like they connect to their schools, as well as demonstrate the importance of higher education to prepare teachers that are skilled at classroom management and instructional support.

The study is part of Peng's larger body of work on [bilingual education](#) and [cognitive function in learning](#) and Patterson's research in [parent-child relationships](#).

The authors said they hope to build on the research by gauging students' feeling of connection over time, or throughout a school year.

"We need much more information on how school connectedness could be fostered," Peng said. "But this does highlight the importance of parental support and especially effective classroom management and how expressing clear expectations in teaching can foster connection."

More information: Anqi Peng et al, What Fosters School Connectedness? The Roles of Classroom Interactions and Parental Support, *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* (2023). [DOI: 10.1007/s10964-023-01908-1](#)

Provided by University of Kansas

Citation: Study finds clear instruction, parental support predict students' sense of school

belonging (2024, March 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2024-03-parental-students-school.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.